

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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TAGS: PINR, PFOR, PINT, CSCE, CZ

SUBJ: FIFTEENTH PARTY CONGRESS: PRESS PREVIEW OF FIFTEENTH PARTY
CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY: MFA PRESS DEPARTMENT SET UP FOREIGN PRESS CENTER TO
HOLD SERIES OF DAILY PRESS CONFERENCES AND BRIEFINGS FOR FOREIGN
MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES THROUGHOUT ENTIRE PERIOD OF PARTY CONGRESS.
MFA PRESS REP ANNOUNCED THAT EXISTANCE OF CONFERENCES COULD
BE ATTRIBUTED TO SIGNING OF HELSINKI FINAL ACT. ALTHOUGH
RESPONSE OF PRESS SPOKESMEN TO QUESTIONS WAS OFTEN LESS THAN
FORTHCOMING, VERY EXISTANCE OF CONFERENCE WAS STEP FORWARD.
AFTER APRIL 9 CONFERENCE, KADNAR MENTIONED THAT VISAS WERE
DENIED TO DUSKO DODER OF WASHINGTON POST AS WELL AS TO TWO
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CORRESPONDENTS OF LE MONDE. (FREUND OF VOA WAS ALSO DENIED VISA.)

OUTLINE AGENDA OF FIFTEENTH PARTY CONGRESS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON FRIDAY, APRIL 9, DR. MILAN KADNAR, MFA PRESS SPOKESMAN, HELD FIRST OF THREE-A-DAY PRESS CONFERENCES FOR FOREIGN MEDIA COVERING FIFTEENTH PARTY CONGRESS. PHONES, TELEX FACILITIES, CLOSED CIRCUIT TV COVERAGE OF MAJOR CONGRESS SPEECHES WITH SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION INTO MAJOR WORLD LANGUAGES, AND POSSIBILITY FOR INTERVIEWS WITH SOME KEY PARTICIPANTS WERE ANNOUNCED. KADNAR OPENED CONFERENCE BY NOTING THAT THIS OCCASION WAS SOMEWHAT OF A NOVELTY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THAT IT WAS OCCASIONED BY THE FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI.

3. APPROXIMATELY 80 PERSONS, INCLUDING RESIDENT MAJOR NEWS SERVICES AND VISITING JOURNALISTS ATTENDED OPENING PRESS CONFERENCE. THEY WERE TOLD 200 FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WOULD COVER CONGRESS SITE, JULIUS FUCEK PARK, FIVE MILES DISTANT ACROSS THE VLTAVA. IN ANSWER TO QUERY WHY WESTERN PRESS WASN'T ALSO ACCOMMODATED AT CONGRESS SITE, KADNAR SAID IT WAS A SPACE PROBLEM.

4. SESSION OPENED WITH PREDICTABLE BRIEFING ON ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROGRESS SINCE LAST PARTY CONGRESS BY J. RISKO, MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE IDEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, AND DIRECTOR OF CZECH RADIO; Z. HORENI, DEPUTY EDITOR OF RUDE PRAVO, AND G. CODR. DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL DIVISION, CZECH TV, WHO GAVE CONGRESS SCHEDULE AND COVERAGE DETAILS.

5. FIRST STIR OF CONTROVERSY IN QUESTION PERIOD OCCURRED WHEN KADNAR SAID HUSAK'S MONDAY AFTERNOON OPENING ADDRESS WOULD BE AVAILABLE AS EMBARGOED TEXT AT NOON SUNDAY FOR SOCIALIST JOURNALISTS. REUTERS, AFP, AND OTHERS ASKED "WHY," AND WERE TOLD THAT THEY WOULD STILL HAVE THE TEXT A DAY IN ADVANCE.

6. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION WHETHER ITALIAN, SPANISH, FRENCH, AND ENGLISH CPS WERE INVITED AND WOULD THEY SEND DELEGATES TO CONGRESS, SPOKESMAN REPLIED, "ALL PARTIES THAT WERE INVITED WILL SEND DELEGATIONS." HE SAID THAT "UNFORTUNATELY, HE DIDN'T HAVE DELEGATES LIST WITH HIM, BUT HE BELIEVED THOSE PARTIES NAMED WOULD SEND DELEGATES." WESTERN JOURNALIST LATER TOLD EMBOFFICER FRENCH AND ITALIAN PARTY DELEGATIONS WILL PROBABLY BE COMPOSED OF SECONDARY FIGURES AND THAT WESTERN CP DELEGATIONS, INSTEAD UNCLASSIFIED

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OF BEING SEATED AT CONGRESS AND SPEAKING THERE, WILL DELIVER THEIR MESSAGES FROM SUCH OUTLYING SPOTS AS KOSICE.

7. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON WHO WOULD HEAD SOVIET DELEGATION, WHICH WILL ADDRESS CONGRESS ON TUESDAY, APRIL 13, KADNAR SAID, "I AM INFORMED BY THE SOVIET PRESS HERE THAT COM. BREZHNEV WILL NOT BE HEADING THE SOVIET DELEGATION, BUT IT WILL BE A TOP-LEVEL DELEGATION, AS IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN." (IT IS RUMORED KIRILENKO

IS COMING.)

8. IN DISCUSSION WITH KADNAR AFTER THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS CONCLUDED, HE TOLD WESTERN PRESS REPRESENTATIVES THAT LE MONDE CORRESPONDANTS' VISA APPLICATIONS WERE TURNED DOWN FOR NON-OBJECTIVE REPORTING AND DUSKO DODER OF THE WASHINGTON POST, WHO HAD BEEN IN PRAGUE IN EARLY MARCH, WAS DENIED A RETURN VISA FOR HIS MARCH 15 PIECE SPECULATING ON HARDLINERS AND MODERATES IN PARTY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS. WESTERN CORRESPONDENT TOLD PAO DODER HAD RAISED THE IRE OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER BILAK, AGAIN FINGERED AS REPRESENTING THE HARD RIGHT.

9. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS: HUSAK'S KEYNOTE SPEECH IS MONDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 12: (A SHORTENED 44-PAGE EXCERPT WILL BE GIVEN TO TV THAT DAY, WHICH IS SOME SUGGESTION OF ITS LENGTH.) SOVIETS SPEAK ON TUESDAY, AND PM L. STROUGAL GIVES HIS ADDRESS THEN AS WELL. PARENTHETICALLY, PARTY AUDITOR'S MONDAY SPEECH, WHICH FOLLOWS HUSAK'S, WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE ON TV. VISITING DELEGATIONS ADDRESS THE CONGRESS ON WEDNESDAY AND PART OF THURSDAY, AFTER WHICH THERE IS A CLOSED SESSION AND BALLOTING FOR MEMBERSHIP ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. CLOSING SESSION WILL BE HELD FRIDAY, WITH ELECTION RESULTS AND NEW APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED.

10. COMMENT: DESPITE ITS OBVIOUS FAVORITISM TOWARD ITS OWN, AND THE CONTINUING QUESTION OF ACCESS BY WESTERN JOURNALISTS TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA, PRESS CENTER AND BRIEFING IDEA REPRESENTS A DISTINCT STEP FORWARD FOR MFA'S PRESS DIVISION. LAST OCTOBER, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM PAO, KADNAR SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE BRIEFINGS FOR FOREIGN PRESS ON PARTY CONGRESS, BUT IDEA WOULD NEVER BE FAVORABLY RECEIVED BY PARTY LEADERSHIP. NOTWITHSTANDING, PRESS CENTER CAME INTO EXISTENCE, PERHAPS IN PART THROUGH KADNAR'S EFFORT, BUT PROBABLY MORE SO TO THAT OF HIS UNCLASSIFIED

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FELLOW FLOVAK AND PATRON, FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK, WHO HAS A PRESS BACKGROUND.

11. THE VISA QUESTION REMAINS A NAGGING ONE. PAO WAS ON PHONE DAILY TO KADNAR DURING PERIOD PRIOR TO CONGRESS ON STATUS OF VARIOUS AMERICAN PRESS VISA APPLICATIONS, AND KADNAR'S OFFICE APPEARED GENUINELY COOPERATIVE, BLAMING SOME OF THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS ON FM CONSULAR SECTION AND "OTHER DEPARTMENTS WHICH MAY NOT HAVE HAD THE SAME LISTS AS WE DID." POINTED OUT THAT AMONG FOREIGN JOURNALISTS ATTENDING IS WILLIAM SHAWCROSS, BIOGRAPHER OF DUBCEK, WHOSE PIECES IN LONDON TIMES HAVE BEEN FREQUENTLY CRITICAL OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP. EMBASSY DID NOT LEARN OF DODER TURNDOWN UNTIL APRIL 9, AND WILL RAISE MATTER AGAIN WITH MFA AS PART OF ITS CONTINUING DISCUSSION OF PRESS QUESTIONS. SOME JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT FREUND OF VOA WAS

DENIED VISA, WITHOUT REASON BEING GIVEN. DEPARTMENT AND
USIA ARE OF COURSE AWARE OF BACKGROUND TO THIS DENIAL. PERRY

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